

CHAPTER II – THE VISION

The overall vision for the Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan is to create a vibrant and sustainable downtown. A mix of land uses ensuring a variety of residential options, shopping in a village atmosphere, and employment opportunities are planned. The emphasis for downtown is to provide inviting public places, transit-oriented development, and build on the unique character and community of the City of Lemon Grove.

This Chapter provides an overview of the public outreach activities, community involvement and policy framework that have influenced the development of the Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan. In addition, this chapter explains the planning factors, goals and objectives that form the foundation of the Specific Plan's development standards, design criteria, and provisions.

A. Public Outreach & Community Input



Preparation of the Specific Plan included a comprehensive public participation process. The public was involved to identify concerns, generate ideas, provide clarity and resolve issues. The following is a brief description of the community involvement and outreach efforts:

Community Workshops

Workshop #1 and Downtown Walking Tour – May 29, 2003. The first public workshop and Downtown Walking Tour was held on May 29, 2003 to provide community members with the opportunity to contribute input and learn about the process. The attendees were divided into five walking tour groups and then toured the entire Downtown area, from Central Avenue to

Lester along Lemon Grove Avenue, Broadway and Main Street. Basic concepts of redevelopment and examples of successful projects were shared with the group, and then they were asked to provide their observations, comments and recommendations from the walking tour.

Workshop #2 – November 20, 2003. The consultant team focused this meeting on development concepts based on input from the first workshop. These concepts included land use, urban design, and pedestrian/transit circulation. Following the presentation, the attendees were asked to share their comments and questions regarding the development concepts. The main issues addressed were separate districts for downtown Lemon Grove, increased density, retail/manufacturing land use, additional parking, and circulation changes.

Technical Advisory Committee Meetings

A Specific Plan Subcommittee, consisting of two members from the City Council, one Planning Commissioner, and two representatives from the community, contributed their unique backgrounds and perspectives toward creation of the Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan. Over the course of several months, the consultants met numerous times with this group to provide information, discuss options and receive the Committee's input regarding goals and issues for the Specific Plan. The direction provided by the Committee was used to develop the Draft Specific Plan. The Committee also met several times independently without the consultants.

B. Specific Plan Goals & Objectives

The Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan policy framework provides the primary guidance for the Specific Plan. All future development and redevelopment within the Specific Plan area shall be consistent with and take direction from the Goals and Objectives expressed in this Section.



The Policy Framework for the Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan is organized as follows:

- **Specific Plan Planning Factors:** Identifies the existing opportunities and constraints that influence and contribute to the creation of the Specific Plan
- **Specific Plan Goals:** Lists the broad goals that guide future development and redevelopment in the Specific Plan Area.
- **Specific Plan Objectives:** Outlines more explicit policy statements to implement the Specific Plan's Goals.

Specific Plan Planning Factors

The planning factors addressed in this Specific Plan were derived from a list of inadequacies in the Downtown Village. These planning factors are based upon community input, market analysis, mobility and parking studies, and observations by the subcommittee and planning consultant team. The planning factors are listed below and grouped into the following categories:

- Policy
- Land Use & Urban Design
- Parking
- Market/Economic
- Transportation/Circulation

Policy Factors

- **Community-Based Plan:** The Specific Plan area, a requirement of the Lemon Grove General Plan, includes a large, vibrant commercial area referred to as “downtown” by residents, business and property owners. Each of the involved stakeholders has ideas about how these different areas shall be preserved or how they shall change. A community that directs its future can keep and

enhance what is valued, while encouraging and allowing changes that contribute to the community's vision.

- **Predictable/Understandable Criteria and Standards:** The City's existing Downtown Storefront Improvement Guidelines (City of Lemon Grove May 2001) are well-written and cite positive examples of design, but are non-specific and not regulatory. Developers' and designers' interpretation of such guidelines are sometimes different from the understanding of City staff or decision-makers.

Land Use & Urban Design Factors

- **Vacant Lots and Buildings:** Vacant buildings present unattractive gaps in Lemon Grove's downtown, influence the appearance of adjacent buildings and detract from the community's economic vitality.
- **Points of Community Pride:** The community has specific unique features with which it strongly identifies and wants to protect, such as the small town village feel, historic structures at the park, the Lemon Grove “Lemon” and the history of the community.
- **Central Civic Space:** The existing Civic Center is underutilized and a new library is planned.
- **Community Circulation Patterns and Signage:** It is difficult to navigate through the Downtown Village because of the lack of adequate signage and the circulation disruptions caused by the Trolley.

Parking Factors

- **Parking Requirements and Intensity of Development:** To satisfy parking requirements for new development, or for redevelopment, relatively large parking lots are required. The result is that smaller lots are difficult to redevelop with adequate on-site parking and may simply deteriorate over time. Lot consolidations to create projects



that could provide adequate on-site parking may be bigger than what the community wants.

- **Location of Public Parking:** The existing parking lots are difficult to locate and access.
- **Limited Vacant Land for Surface Parking Lots:** Land that could be used for surface parking in the specific plan area is very limited and competes with development potential.

Market/Economic Factors

- **Unique Retail:** Multiple areas of the Downtown currently offer distinct retail/service opportunities.
- **Commercial:** Commercial land uses are underutilized throughout the project area.
- **Residential:** The City of Lemon Grove has identified the need for more housing to support the vision of mixed-use and TOD.

Transportation/Circulation Factors

- **San Diego Trolley:** At-grade trolley lines create significant traffic and pedestrian circulation impacts.
- **Highway 94 Access:** Large volumes of traffic entering the community from Highway 94 create congestion at multiple intersections and several roadway segments within the Downtown area.
- **Integrated Modes of Transportation:** Multiple modes of transportation (trolley, bus, auto, bicycle and pedestrian) are available to the community but are poorly integrated.
- **Pedestrian Circulation:** Lemon Grove Avenue, the trolley tracks right-of-way, and Main Street hinder pedestrian circulation.

- **Pedestrian Linkages:** There is a lack of pedestrian linkages throughout the Downtown Village.
- **At-Grade Trolley Crossings:** The trolley station and at-grade street crossings at Central Avenue, Broadway and Lemon Grove Avenue adjacent to Highway 94 create vehicular and pedestrian congestion and safety concerns and divides the community.

Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies/Actions

The following goals and objectives for the Lemon Grove Downtown Village Specific Plan provide the foundation of the regulatory framework that is implemented through the land use plan, zoning regulations, development standards, and design criteria. These goals and objectives are intended to complement the evaluation of future proposals and design concepts to determine if they are supportive of the spirit and intent of this plan. The implementation strategies/actions support the goals and objectives. The Specific Plan will guide decision-makers to determine whether a project will contribute to the desired future of Lemon Grove.

Implementation Strategies and Actions are specific and measurable. They direct the City in specific ways to reach its goals. This includes not only the goals stated in the Specific Plan, but also the broader goals of the Lemon Grove General Plan.

Land Use

Goal (1): Create a vibrant downtown district that is visually attractive and compatible with the village atmosphere of the current downtown Lemon Grove.

Objective (1):

- Create a strong sense of identity for the Downtown Village through enhancement of streetscapes, architectural form, and site planning.



- Establish a comprehensive signage system of informational and directional signs to direct vehicular and other travelers to the Downtown districts and parking facilities.

Implementation Strategies/Actions (1):

- Create appropriate development standards and design criteria that promote the area.
- Develop and implement sidewalk and streetscape improvements in commercial areas.
- Create a landscape program that strengthens the individual identity of each district, enhances linkages between districts, and creates an inviting pedestrian atmosphere by introducing shade and pedestrian scale elements.
- Encourage signage that provides sufficient direction and identification.
- Encourage the use of art to enhance public areas.

Goal (2): Create a pedestrian friendly environment.

Objectives (2):

- Establish a land use pattern that provides a variety of uses.
- Encourage infill development to be redeveloped in a more visually distinctive and pedestrian-friendly way.
- Create separate development standards and design guidelines that create distinct districts within the Downtown Village.
- Ensure the implementation of the Specific Plan.

Implementation Strategies/Actions (2):

- Limit uses that do not contribute to the pedestrian environment.
- Divide the Downtown Village Specific Plan area into Districts with distinctive uses, development standards and design guidelines.

Goal (3): Encourage transit-oriented development to create comfortable, walkable neighborhoods centered around a safe and

attractive transit station serving multi-modal transportation. There are opportunities for changes in densities and implementation of smart growth development ideals to create a concentrated downtown core, and utilize transit-oriented development principles.

Objective (3):

- Create core uses that have a direct relationship to transit.

Implementation Strategies/Actions (3):

- Allow for high residential densities to be developed in close proximity to transit locations.
- Encourage safe, comfortable and convenient pedestrian crossing options.
- Encourage businesses surrounding the transit station serving local residents and commuters.

Parking

Goal (4): Obtain a parking supply that is balanced to support the viability of commercial district businesses while minimizing impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.

Objectives (4):

- Enhance the usability of transit stops (bus and trolley)
- Pursue parking agreements with commercial owners of underutilized parking lots or purchase land to provide public parking.

Implementation Strategies (4):

- Reduce the need for parking by promoting mass transit.
- Create an Integrated Transit Center in cooperation with the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS).
- Use signage to direct vehicles to appropriate convenient parking for their specific destination or activity.
- Create a program to collect fees from Downtown Village redevelopment projects that are unable to provide required parking on-site to provide additional public parking.



Economic Development

Goal (5): Create a long term, sustainable business environment for business and property owners.

Objectives (5):

- Encourage a unique retail environment.
- Enhance the pedestrian-oriented environment.
- Promote retention of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses that are desired in Lemon Grove.
- Increase population within walking distance through greater residential densities downtown and allowing for residential development above existing storefronts.

Implementation Strategies (5):

- Develop funding mechanisms, where appropriate and feasible, to implement public improvements and business-improvement activities.
- Implement a well-coordinated maintenance program for sidewalks, streets, and landscaping.
- Develop a neighborhood that allows for people to satisfy all aspects of their lives including, work, residences, shopping, recreation, education and culture.
- Provide Wide-Area Wi-Fi to Downtown Business and Residential Districts.

Transportation/Circulation

Goal (6): Obtain a level of mobility (walking, bicycles, transit and auto) that furthers economic development, convenience, safety and choice for residents, visitors, and the business community.

Objectives (6):

- Enhance the usability of transit stops (bus and trolley).
- Accommodate the grade separation of trolley and streets.

Implementation Strategies (6):

- Pursue funding opportunities with MTS for creating grade-separated crossings for the Trolley at Central Avenue, Broadway and Lemon Grove Avenue.
- Reduce the number of auto trips and congestion through better management of parking supply, public transit improvements, and consideration of roadway improvements.
- When pedestrian/vehicular/cyclist conflicts require compromise, favor the pedestrian and cyclists.

Goal (7): Encourage sustainable development, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In addition, promote green building design, which includes for example energy efficient design and renewable, nonpolluting materials.

Objectives (7):

- Create efficient infrastructure
- Use resources more efficiently
- Protect and preserve natural resources
- Improve economic development and building marketability
- Enhance occupant comfort, health and productivity

Implementation Strategies (7):

- Encourage project designs that incorporate a reduction of construction debris and building operating materials in the landfills
- Encourage project designs that achieve lower operating and maintenance costs while providing a comfortable environment for the occupants
- Continue to research and identify programs to the project proponents that provide incentives to achieve this goal.



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